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SEEING OURSELVES IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

BY
BERNARD HOLLANDER, M.D.

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CHAPTER I

Human Character and Conduct in the Light of Modern Psychology

THE old psychology, which was dominant until the beginning of this century, was an abstract study of the intellect and consciousness, of little or no interest or value to the layman. Modern psychology concerns itself largely with the study of human character and the problems of daily life, and has thrown its searchlight on every form of activity, including even the psychology of industry and of advertising. Modern psychology has therefore become of universal interest. It is something which everyone is using throughout his life, though he may never have read a text-book on that subject, and may never call it by that name.

Whereas the academic psychologist of the past was wont to meditate in his college chambers on the nature of mind and the association of ideas, the pioneers of modern psychology and many of its contributors are medical men, who have a wider outlook on life and better opportunities to become acquainted with the diversities—especially the weaknesses—of men and the problems they have to face.

Few people take the trouble to get to know themselves. They do not take stock of their mental machinery, and certainly they hardly ever inquire whether there are any ascertainable laws governing the operations of the mind. Yet it is upon a proper knowledge of these laws that the whole art of efficient thinking and acting depends. Most men acquire their rules of conduct and their philosophy of life by the hard facts of experience, which is a slow process, and often a painful one; while a little systematic teaching at the proper time might save them from many a mistake and perhaps from drifting into misfortune, undesirable habits, or evil ways. If a man does not know his weak qualities and his over-active ones, how to develop the one and curb the other, he will stand little chance of succeeding in the battle of life—in the fight with his outside foes and those within.

Sir Robert Armstrong Jones, the distinguished alienist, emphasized this fact some time ago in an address, in which he said : " No driver would think of using a machine without first finding out something about its mechanism and how it worked. Yet in the study of the mind many who pride themselves on possessing one are perfectly heedless about its mechanism: although the mind is much more complicated, and more interesting also, than the motor car." Fortunately for most of us, the human mind is to a great extent self-acting. Sometimes, however, the mind does go wrong; indeed, it is only too surprising, considering that it has 14,000 millions of brain cells (according to the latest estimate) to work on, that this happens so seldom. On the other hand, when the mind is looked after, and is attended to until it is understood, it is capable of superlative achievements; for it can carry us into great positions of power and distinction, and enable us to maintain them, in spite of keen competition for a place in the sun. The advantages of an elementary knowledge of psychology are therefore clear.

At school mere knowledge may suffice for excellence; but in actual life character counts for more. By character I mean the sum-total of those dispositions which guide a man in his conduct and make for consistency in behaviour. The mere fact of a person having a character means that his tendencies are so uniformly the same that he can be trusted, under similar conditions, to act always in the same way. Our character is our limitation, and if we had no limitation we should be unreliable. Of course, we *can* change our natural dispositions; but we cannot change them in one day. If we did our friends would watch us with anxiety. Not only is our character our limitation, but in other ways too we can scarcely say that we are free agents; at least, not to the extent commonly believed. We are heavily fettered both by our heredity and our environment. No one can choose his birth-place, his religion, or his hereditary trend or type. No one can choose his parents or his teachers. Therefore, by the time a youth reaches adult years his mind is fully formed before he can assert his will. Often, too, his vocation has already been chosen for him. When, in addition, it is remembered that a man does not belong to himself, but has attachments to his family, community, and species, it cannot in any true sense be affirmed that he is an entirely free agent.

We are all born with certain primary dispositions and feelings, which become active under suitable stimuli. Early training and experience may modify our natural dispositions;

but they cannot create them. Take, for example, the sex instinct, which gives rise to the feeling of love. What is it that makes a youth fall in love? The girl he has met is not, properly speaking, the cause of the love. She is only the stimulus which evokes those amorous tendencies that are already present in potential form. The same is true of the girl who thinks she has fallen in love with a particular man. Without the amorous tendency she would have been incapable of the act. He was merely the object that started her innate feelings into activity. This fact explains why so often the first love is not a desirable one from a parent's point of view. Probably the reader has never looked at love in this way. Therefore let me give a different example showing the importance of the innate character.

We are all born with different degrees of temper. In some it is rarely roused; in others it is readily excited. This can be seen already in infancy, and persists with modifications throughout life. The man who is of amiable temperament would be amiable almost anywhere, for he sees the amiable qualities of other people, and no others; just as a lover sees the good qualities, and not the bad ones, in the girl he adores; and just as the egoist sees his own good qualities, but not his own undesirable ones. This has certain consequences. It accounts for the amiable man being naturally popular among his associates; for he speaks well of others, and is actuated by a kindly disposition towards them. Evil qualities do not touch him greatly. They pass him by, leaving little impression. His judgments of the world are benevolent. He is more often heard praising what is good than reviling what is bad.

These observations of individual character will also help to explain racial character and some of the problems which confront nations. Let us consider the question, for instance, why people make war. Many objective reasons are always given. There has been aggression by the enemy; the enemy has committed some offence. Those who think that the key to human nature is found in logic elaborate the most ingenious arguments as to why it is absolutely essential to go to war. The arguments may be beyond criticism, or they may not. But certain it is that among modern civilizations they do not touch the real cause of war. The alleged or real offence committed by the enemy merely unlocks the fighting passion which slumbers in most men. Those who are not convinced, those who feel differently, or are unwilling to make the sacrifice, are suitably roused by propaganda notices in the Press. They are told that the enemy is a villain who threatens their exist-

ence, that it is he who is making war, and that therefore no blame attaches to those who defend themselves and treat him as a villain deserves. If the fighting passion is jaded or exhausted, men are difficult to whip into war. An offence by the enemy in such case will attract little attention. But if the passions are fresh, and have not been provoked for some time, that same offence will suffice to set all civilization in a blaze.

Let us look at another instance. It is sometimes alleged that if kings and aristocracies were abolished men would cease to be snobbish. This opinion is due to the same fallacy, which supposes that the external cause creates the feeling, instead of merely mobilizing that feeling in those in whom it exists. Snobbishness is not due to kings and aristocracies. It would be nearer the mark to say that kings and aristocracies are due to snobbishness: for snobbishness is a strong innate feeling, and all strong feelings encourage the growth of external institutions which incite and stimulate them.

The unconscious instincts and feelings are the basis of our character, and condition conduct to a far greater extent than the views of life that we express, and by which we believe we are actuated. Thus, people who fondly imagine that they are moved by nothing but a sense of duty are often surprised to discover that the real motive of their conduct is the gratification of some latent desire. For example, the man with large love of approbation may think he goes to parties because he loves company, when actually it is his desire to shine which urges him to go out. Another may consider himself very sociable, and may appear so, though all the time it is merely his acquisitiveness which drives him out, in the hope of finding people who may be useful to him in his business or profession.

The three principal emotions which dominate man are love, anger, and fear. Love is an expanding emotion, for it causes the subject to extend his affection to others; sometimes it includes a love for the whole of humanity. On the other hand, anger is a narrowing emotion. If habitually indulged in, it may give rise to quick temper. It is generally due to faulty education, the person never having learnt self-control. Such people are often by nature very amiable, so long as they have their own way; but when thwarted in their desires they behave like little children, giving way to spontaneous fits of frenzy, with all the cries and movements characteristic of anger.

Many a man attributes his ill humour to those who surround him. He does not realize that if the conduct of others has

been the cause of his emotion the fault has been his own, because of the way in which he has allowed himself to react to it.

Fear is another contracting emotion, and makes a person timid; and there are other contracting tendencies. The inveterate hater, for instance, is a contractive; so is the inveterately distrustful, the discouraged, the irresolute, the jealous, the sulking and the morose person, the blasé and the snob. On the other hand, the sympathetic person is expansive. Etymologically, sympathy means "to suffer with." Other examples of expansiveness are the magnanimous person; the hopeful, admiring, and the humorous person. In judging a man ask yourself whether he is of narrow mind, satisfied with the *status quo* and intolerant of other opinions; or whether he is interested in the world, in the march of mankind to new and more adequate goals, hopeful of all honest, forward-looking ideas and enterprises.

Some people suffer from an excess of fear or anxiety to appear well in the eyes of others, which makes them morbidly self-conscious and shy. This causes a man not sure of himself to watch his movements, which should be automatic, and thus impairs his efficiency. It may literally paralyse movement and cause a stuttering speech. The greater the self-consciousness and consequent shyness, the more awkward the person, and the more frequent slips and accidents, which further aggravate the complaint. This is why the shy person trips over a rug on entering a room, upsets a glass, or draws attention to himself by some other mishap. The mere recollection of the accident revives the feeling and intensifies it.

It is not unusual, in the case of nervous people, to find some part of their anatomy in rhythmical and incessant action. Others are everlastingly fixing their clothes, or adjusting their necktie; they seem never to be able to complete their toilet. Some are addicted to giggling, "nervous laughter," "sheepish" expression, or inability to look one straight in the face—the eyes glancing up, down, on one side, or askance; and these physical signs are often accompanied by mental confusion, flurry, the employment of wrong words, the making of ridiculous remarks, and the doing of ridiculous things.

Distinctive unconscious muscular actions are often associated with certain classes of people. There is the rustic who scratches his head, the horseman who whips his riding-boot, the thinker who finds inspiration in fingering his beard or tearing paper to pieces, the heavy dragoon who tugs at his moustache, the old drum-major who twirls his cane, the

bashful girl who puts a finger in her mouth or who bites her nails, the impatient visitor who is kept waiting and drums with his fingers on window-panes or tables; and persons who, while talking, nervously move their legs.

People who are over-anxious about their appearance and the impression they make on others are apt to get nervous and fidgety, and make everyone else uncomfortable. In confirmation of this, let anyone observe our modern young ladies, in the stalls of a theatre, in restaurants, or in public conveyances, and he is bound to notice how they open their vanity bags every few minutes, gaze at themselves in the mirror, paint their lips and powder their faces, tuck up strands of hair, adjust their dress, and fumble at their ornaments.

The real trouble of the shy individual is not his inferiority, but the importance he attaches to it, as if the whole world were interested only in him. That the shy man is not necessarily distrustful of his own powers is shown by the fact that he may become aggressive—even offensively so—in his writings. Some of our most self-assertive and combative writers have been shy men.

Excessively self-conscious people fear failure if exposed to the public eye. This causes the stage-fright of performers. Others fear all kinds of company, so that they become unsociable. Others merely fear having to interview people, such as prospective employers; while others, again, fear responsibility; and, lastly, most people fear the unexpected and unknown.

Nervous people often suffer from morbid fears, uncontrollable dreads, such as the fear of open places, enclosed spaces, crowded or solitary places; or else fear of lightning, precipices, knives, special diseases, or contact with certain animals; and so forth. The absurdity of the fear is usually recognized by the victim, but cannot be conquered by him. The attempt to drive the fear away merely makes him feel worse. He therefore avoids the situations which give rise to his particular fears.

Fear is one of the strongest emotions with which the human race has to battle. It is a universal emotion. The man who fears nothing is found only in the realms of the popular novel. It attacks the bravest spirits in some form or other. The soldier who goes boldly into battle tends to be nervous or filled with fear if called upon to take an unfamiliar part, such as addressing an audience. In common language, he does not "feel up to it," and his anxiety is no more than the emotional expression of his lack of experience and consequent

inadequacy. A child that is afraid can run and hide in his mother's skirts; but the grown man must stand his ground, and his desire to escape is expressed only in the hopeless wish that the ground might open and swallow him.

The timid individual finds Life's problems difficult, and may seek to evade them. Curiously, fear itself, without the conscious wish of the person suffering from it, will in some mysterious manner generate symptoms of illness. Many a student when up for examination has experienced this; but it affects likewise men who do not like a particular job, or do not like to be confronted with a painful situation. Many of the neurasthenics are men thus afflicted. They are supposed to suffer from nervous exhaustion; but in a great many cases there is no lack of energy except in one direction—the one they are afraid of. I have had a commercial traveller explaining to me eloquently for nearly an hour, in an incessant talk, the misery he suffered from the state of his nerves and consequent general ill-health, which incapacitated him for his work. When he had finished I had to tell him that if he had used the same amount of energy in offering me his goods he might have succeeded in selling me some, and that he was not suffering from lack of energy so much as from misdirected energy.

Fear is the basis of that common complaint worry. Worry is caused not by thinking alone but by anxious thinking; that is to say, by thinking plus a feeling of anxiety. It is a process of borrowing trouble from the future to augment our present sorrows.

If we fear, we open ourselves to all sorts of fancies, which correspond to our thoughts and cause them to take shape. People who fear burglars or ghosts are apt to see them.

Fear can cause envy and jealousy. Even wars are the outcome of fears. Fear enters into religion. It inspires the prejudice which stifles unbiased enquiry. It enters into every detail of daily life. We picture calamities of every description and dread the worst. The sensational Press furnishes constant material for fear. We fear to eat this and that. We dread, anticipate, and really put ourselves in the best attitude to take disease. We live in constant fear of death. Fear runs back to our willingness to believe rather than to think for ourselves. It is based on ignorance, increases in intensity with the degree of superstition, and vanishes when we understand the law of cause and effect.

The man given to fear, self-depreciation, a sense of inferiority, excessive self-consciousness, shyness, is one who flies from reality and cannot adapt himself to his environment.

It is probable that some form of flight from reality exists in the mental mechanisms of most people. The man who believes that he was beaten at a game by an unlucky accident, the workman who believes his discharge was due to personal enmity on the part of his employer rather than to his own inefficiency, the wife who refuses to see her husband's waning interest and attributes to his fatigue what is due to her own neglect of personal appearance and stimulating conversation, are all common illustrations. It may be that this type of flight from reality is a protective mechanism. It is quite possible that, were the individual to visualize himself with all his limitations as clearly at all times as he does in those rare moments of self-revelation and self-appraisal which occasionally come to most of us, he would soon lose courage to "carry on" in the business of life.

Another peculiarity of human nature is that we are apt to admire those who represent the things we have not. Thus a man who is timid of the world may raise his voice in praise of courage. Millionaires with little or no education often give great endowments to universities. Books on sex are frequently written by those whose own sex life is in some way or other abnormal. For the same reason, the heaven pictured by the desert-tired Anchorite was a paradise, a garden of fruitful trees and quiet waters; for the Mohammedan exiled from home and family it was the luxurious couch and dusky-eyed maidens; for the bereaved Spiritualist a place where he will be united again with the dear ones he lost; for the labourer, whose days are spent in toil, a place of perfect rest and idleness; whilst for the care-free Oxford undergraduate heaven is a place of service.

Our innate dispositions, our dominant instincts and feelings, gather the appropriate thoughts and the memory of certain impressive experiences around them, and thus form what psychologists call "complexes." We may have a complex of home, of patriotism, or rectitude, or an inferiority complex —i.e., a complex of self-depreciation. There is no limit to the variety of complexes. Many of them are acquired during early childhood and may last a life-time.

The complex makes us accept ideas and arguments which are in harmony with it, whereas those not so in harmony tend to be inhibited. Consciousness is rarely permitted to approach a new matter without subconscious prepossessions. It is overruled—or guided, as the case may be—by what has gone before. In accordance with the complexes already formed, so will "suggestion" appeal to us and we shall be influenced by

it; but no persuasion or suggestion will make us alter our complexes. If, for example, we argue with anyone who has settled views on politics, religion, or any other subject, we shall only reinforce his own views, for he will select those arguments favourable to his own and fail to see—and, what is more serious, fail to understand—those propounded on the opposite side. The complex with its pronounced emotional tone is, in fact, a more potent agent in determining the direction of his thoughts than the cold claims of logic. In the language of everyday life, we should say that the man was unconsciously biased. Unfortunately, this rigid habit is evidenced in all the thoughts and acts of our daily life, and is the cause of many evils.

Some people have experiences which give rise to complexes of a disagreeable kind, complexes which act like foreign bodies on their mental constitution, being, for some reason, out of harmony with the remainder of their personality, or with the conventions by which they are surrounded, or out of harmony with their conscious desires. In such a case, the person may try to banish the disagreeable thought or experience from the mind and attempt to forget its very existence. But though relegated to the unconscious it may continue to influence, in a distorted or an indirect manner, the flow of his conscious thought.

A familiar instance is the case of a woman who cannot bear the sight of cats. The presence of one may make her actually ill. This can often be accounted for by some fright which she suffered when a child, perhaps having been badly scratched by a cat. Or perhaps, someone who disliked her once called her a "cat." She repressed the incident, may have forgotten all about it; but ever since, the sight of that animal has called forth unpleasant feelings.

Some people suffer from complexes which provoke in them undesirable or unattainable desires, and they attempt to strengthen the repression of them by an exaggeration in consciousness of the opposite quality or tendency to those which are being repressed. Simple instances of such "projection," as this mental process is called by psychologists, abound in everyday life. The extreme primness and prudery found sometimes in middle-aged spinsters is an example of this, and proves that the old adage that "we damn the sins we have no mind to" is the reverse of the truth, for there is always at least a tendency in ourselves to the vices we condemn in others. It is the cantankerous man who reproaches everyone with ill-temper; and there is nobody so suspicious of others

as the person who is himself deceitful. The man who suspects other people of listening behind the door is often one who stood there himself. Those who are not sure of themselves, of their social position, are often the most critical of newcomers.

People who suffer from undesirable dispositions which tend to mar their prospects in life would do well to deal with them honestly; but they often shirk the ordeal. Most men readily admit their sins; few are willing to confess their faults. Even if they recognize the hidden defects in their character they are not always frank enough to give them the right names. For instance, what they would call sharp practice in a rival they like to think commendable "alertness" in themselves; obstinacy they call "strong will"; deceitfulness is named "diplomacy"; cowardice, "caution"; and bullying, "self-defence."

When two complexes, or two instinctive forces, of incompatible character are excited at the same time by some event an internal conflict is likely to arise. The conflict may be overcome by conscious control, choosing what is the correct path at the moment. Others try to evade the conflict by self-deception. They repress—split off—the undesirable instinct into a logic-tight compartment, so that it can never meet the other force in consciousness. Such is the case with the man who leads a moral and perhaps religious life in his suburban home and is given to sharp practices in his business transactions.

Some people suppress a painful experience into the unconscious, so that it is apparently forgotten. We often forget things because either we do not like to remember them or they are associated with something which we do not care to remember. Thus we forget the appointment we have no wish to keep. We arrive late in the hope of not finding a man at home. It is not our fault that the car has broken down on the way or the train was late in arriving. We do not admit that we could have started earlier. The man who no longer loves his wife forgets her birthday; quite unintentionally, of course.

Such suppression—or repression, as it is called by psychologists—of unapproved desires or unpleasant experiences may result in a continuous state of nervous irritability and strain and have disastrous effects on the individual's health. When people are said to have died of a broken heart this is often the reason. Domestic quarrels frequently are caused by the husband or wife being more easily irritated because of some repressed emotion.

The consequence of repression—in some persons, at all events—is that it sets up what are called “defence reactions,” a sort of make-believe, in order to protect the individual from criticism of his unfortunate instinctive longings. Thus the elderly spinster who hates men because they are so deceitful is a case in point. She disguises her real feelings by saying that she has chosen not to marry because marriage often proves a failure. She may even collect cases of unfaithfulness reported in newspapers so as to convince herself and others of the wisdom of her decision. Another case in point is the idler who shirks work and hides the fact that he is not looking for any—at least not seriously—by pointing to the slump in trade and the increasing number of unemployed.

Our repressed tendencies and experiences, of which we are no longer conscious, frequently influence our dreams. In dreams our repressed wishes and tendencies receive imaginary gratification, and are fulfilled in a disguised or symbolic form. The sleeper who is thirsty may dream that he is quenching his thirst with copious draughts from some refreshing spring. But the vast majority of adult dreams are not so simple or obvious as this example. The ordinary dream is often a meaningless jumble of ludicrous situations, without rhyme or reason. For instance, a man may be anxious about his health. In the dream he misses his train. Trains mean departure—death. The significance of the dream, therefore, is the message that he is not going to die yet. Similarly he may be anxious about something else; in that case, missing the train means that he is not to give up hope.

Some people, unable to gratify their desires, seek satisfaction for them in imaginative day-dreaming. Day-dreaming is often the expression of our inner nature. When we cannot obtain gratification of our ambitions and desires in real life we build castles in the air. One would be surprised if one could know how many people lead a double existence, an external and an imagined one; the one narrow, humble; the other full of foolish fancies and air-castles, of intrigues of their own making; and fancied situations, of which they dream they are the heroes, and where there is room for their unsatisfied longings and unused powers. There is many a Cinderella idling in the kitchen while she dreams of the Prince who is never arriving. Still, she is happy thinking of him. Others have their active emotions and desires gratified by identifying themselves with certain characters in novels or dramas when there is no other outlet for them.

The chronic day-dreamer substitutes wishing for doing.

His day-dream is the conscious expression of the elaborate, usually impossible, and not infrequently unwise, wish. He lives largely in the future, is always *going* to do something really splendid, but somehow never does. Sometimes he has real ability, but often his dreams are impractical.

The day-dreaming that leads to failure is almost invariably associated with a feeling of inferiority (whether justified by the facts or not), and has its origin in a personality marked by over-sensitiveness and timidity. Such a personality shrinks from participating in the rebuffs and the rivalries of the everyday world; and, to compensate itself for the harshness of the realities of life, retreats to the rose-coloured warmth of an imaginary environment.

We cannot repress all our complexes; and those our better nature does not approve of, or we are unable to repress, we try to explain to ourselves by the manufacture of plausible reasons more agreeable and acceptable to us than would be a correct understanding of the real motive force. We are always excusing our conduct, whether in private or in public life. We are all constantly inventing reasons in defence of our interests and inborn character, thus giving way to conscious or unconscious hypocrisy. This process of concealing our undesirable longings and feelings by approved reasons is termed "rationalization." Reason has been called in, so to speak, to help the victim out of his or her trouble.

Rationalization is a process of finding excuses for actions which were carried out under the sole influence of the feelings. Thus a jealous man "finds reasons" for his dislike of his rival; a lover, for his affection; a man in a rage, for his loss of temper. The intellect is made the slave of caprice and impulse in order that a semblance of sense and order may be preserved. We see this already in childhood. Suppose that a boy has arrived late at school and the teacher has demanded an explanation. If the boy were to tell the truth, he would have to confess that he hated school and loitered so as to delay his arrival. Such a reply would be denounced as impudent and punished accordingly. Consequently he invents an untruth, or exaggerates a half-truth, by saying: "Mother was late with the breakfast," or "the clock was wrong," "it was raining and my shoes leaked." Often the loving mother is to blame for defending such a boy.

People usually rationalize when they do not have the courage to face situations frankly and openly. They have to take refuge behind some high-sounding "reasons" which are simply disguised excuses. They hide their weaknesses and

defects by reasonable and acceptable explanations, deceiving themselves more than anyone else. It is the looker-on, seeing their behaviour from a different angle, who will find an explanation different from theirs. Thus otherwise perfectly honest people will not hesitate to swindle the income-tax authorities, or a railway company, and even boast of it to their friends, explaining their conduct by saying that no harm has been done, since they are over-taxed in any case and the railway fares are exorbitant. We are constantly rationalizing our hatred of people, of certain classes, nations or races, by putting forward such defects in their character and conduct that no respectable man could love them. As a matter of fact, the hatred comes first and the reasons are found afterwards.

Another and more desirable method by which some men try to conquer their disagreeable impulses and unapproved complexes is by so intensely occupying themselves with other matters of a widely different and, if possible, higher nature that no time is left for the impulse to arise. This is called by psychologists the process of "sublimation," and is perhaps the best way of escape. Such sublimation may take the form, in the case of a man with an unhappy home-life, of an increased activity along intellectual lines or an immersion in business.

These mental complexes determine the course of thoughts and forbid logical thinking. Evidence is not weighed impartially. They are the more disastrous to accurate reasoning because the individual is not aware that he has them. The belief that men generally know why they hold certain opinions is erroneous. The mental bias settles the line that thoughts shall take. "Thinking is often a re-arrangement of our prejudices. Man, however, craves consistency, so the usual procedure is first to come to an opinion, and then to find 'reasons' for holding it." (E. J. Swift.)

Convictions and judgments, standards of conduct and bearing, have been acquired from early training. Precept and example, often repeated and enforced, have accumulated in man's nature forces which are now unconsciously operative. In dealing with any fresh matter he will meet it with a number of long-stored convictions. His judgment on a new question will depend upon the complexes he has formed. That is why prejudices do not diminish in number with the advance of civilization. They simply vary in kind; and this is one of our mental handicaps. Man thinks he is progressing merely because he has thrown aside some ideas which were in vogue fifty or a hundred years ago. It is easy to see prejudice in

the thoughts and beliefs of earlier periods, because they stand out in contrast with the background of modern knowledge; but the prejudice in beliefs which are fashionable to-day is not so easily detected.

A prejudice is a logic-tight mental complex of a settled nature no longer to be enquired into. It sometimes requires generations to wear it out. It took over 300 years to overcome the prejudice against the use of potatoes as a food; and we all know how long it took to live down the superstition of witchcraft, and how violently we support our politics, or our religion, although we may know little about either, merely having been brought up in a particular set of beliefs. Most people are keenly alive to the prejudices of others, and are usually blind to their own prejudices, which they generally regard as the dictates of their common sense.

Credulity and prejudices are two obstacles which we have to guard against. The man who will believe anything that he is told without weighing the evidence, and without appealing to his own reason and judgment, will always be swayed by other people's opinions and errors, and will probably intensify fallacy by his own misconceptions. The man who is prejudiced, who holds on tightly to dogmas, conventionalities, and race-beliefs, and refuses to look into new interpretations and restatements of facts, simply bolts and bars the door against truth. One can reason with an honest doubter if he has an open mind; but a prejudiced man is hopeless, for he is not teachable.

The man who is guided solely by his complexes keeps to his ancient beliefs, and never notices the change that has been brought about by new discoveries, whether it be in commerce, politics, or religion. Such a man is in much the same position as the pike in Prof. Möbius's famous experiment.

Möbius experimented with a pike, which he fed, among other things, on minnows kept free in the tank. After a time he put into the tank a glass partition in order to separate the pike from the minnows, its favourite food. The pike, eager to catch them, in its futile attempts repeatedly struck its head against the partition. After having suffered pain for some weeks from the persistent effort, the pike ceased to trouble about the minnows. The glass partition was then removed; but, though the minnows were now swimming around the pike, they were left unmolested. The glass partition was fixed permanently in the mind of the pike.

Just as in the case of the pike, so there are many men whose minds remain fixed in one particular belief, and who

never realize when science has removed a partition which reveals a great truth.

With many people it is not a question whether a doctrine is true, but whether it makes them comfortable. Rationalists are moved by a desire to know. The man who trusts to faith alone has no natural zest for knowledge. He dreads a scientific enquiry for fear the result might deprive him of the crutches which support him in his false belief. The disadvantage of such fixed complexes is that they stunt the growth of the mind.

Now if we want a better world and better men and women we must start with the children. To obviate the faults enumerated, parents and teachers should not be too critical of the efforts of a child at all inclined to be nervous; otherwise a feeling of inferiority may be awakened, which in after years will cause him to become afraid whenever he has to assume responsibility or meet difficult situations. Sometimes the foundation is laid for future trouble by the too strict and harsh treatment of an impressionable and emotional child who is sensitive and in need of loving care. It is also well to remember that teasing, chaffing, bullying, ragging, and undue punishment are apt to drive a child into solitude, introspection, and preoccupation with his grievances, and this may be the first step to mental unsoundness in later years.

On the other hand, if, in order to encourage the child, he is incessantly flattered and continually has his praises sung by fatuous parents, he may become abnormally vain and fail to realize that he has any limitations. These habits may work successfully enough within the family circle, but they do not correspond with the kind of habits necessary for success outside that sphere.

Modern psychology has also called attention to the fact that frequently an exaggerated attachment is formed to either parent, and that such children lack independence in later years. When old enough, even the choice of a husband, or wife, may be determined by the parental pattern. Consequently, it is of importance that the child should get into touch with the outside world as much as possible and mix with other children.

The first-born child is often made a fuss of; the youngest of a number is domineered over by his elders. Children whose will is quashed often develop excessive obedience to authoritative influence, with the result that they become servile and incapable of any action without an appropriate command from someone else.

One child is brought up in a manner that creates in him confidence of easily solving the problems which he is likely to meet, and thereafter develops courage, openness, frankness, responsibility, industry, and the like. Another is brought up in such a manner that he lacks that confidence; in which case we find timidity, introspectiveness, distrust, and pessimism. When the child builds up excuses for himself or imputes his faults to others his case needs attention.

Children should be taught not to avoid difficulties, for happiness cannot be achieved by shirking the inevitable. Good fortune does not necessarily bring happiness, nor misfortune unhappiness. It all depends on our standpoint to the world around us, on the impressions we allow it to make upon us, and our reactions to them.

There is the well-known story of the Oriental potentate whose son was plunged into the depth of melancholy. Wise men were summoned to advise what should be done. After long consideration they decided that he could be cured if they could find an absolutely happy man and transfer the shirt of that happy man to the patient. Emissaries were dispatched to all parts of the kingdom, and finally a really happy man was found. But lo! he had no shirt.

The implications of this story are obvious. It is not so much in the externals that happiness or failure resides, but in us, and our attitude toward them. We may not be able to control circumstances, but we have some control of the effect circumstances have upon us.

Finally, let me point out what the reader may have already discerned for himself—that psychology does not really teach us anything new. It only explains—gives the reasons for—what is already known to us. But it is evident that modern psychology, by the light it throws on our mental processes, helps us toward perfecting our character and conduct.

CHAPTER II

Good and Bad Men

MAN has gradually developed from the animal stage to a higher being. His mental constitution consists of instinctive dispositions (propensities) and the emotions derived from them, besides social affections, intellectual abilities, and æsthetical, ethical, and other sentiments. Now in some men this upward development is arrested. Their minds never get beyond the animal stage.

Philosophers for ages have assumed an innate moral sense in man which guides him in his actions; but there is no such faculty in existence. Morality is simply adaptation to the social order, based on a desire to live with our fellow men on the best possible terms. The actions sanctioned by morality are those which may be proved by sober reason to be conducive to the well-being and the progress of the race. Its prohibitions fall upon the actions which, if freely indulged in, would lead to the degeneration, if not extinction, of mankind. Thus morality simply includes the rules and regulations by which we may all live together in the most happy manner possible; and immorality, broadly speaking, means anti-social acts—acts either harmful to oneself, thus lowering the general standard, or harmful to the general good.

As civilization advanced, rulers and religious functionaries established laws, some of which acquired great force from the belief that they were inspired. Thus we have Moses bringing down from Mount Sinai, upon tables of stone, the Ten Commandments. Other prophets and leaders inscribed moral laws in sacred books. One thing is certain: the vitality of the moral law is not bound up with any particular creed. Whether men believed in Jupiter or Jehovah, in Buddha or in Jesus, they could not fail to find out that some obedience to moral law is essential to social evolution.

Christian theologians assumed that the instincts in themselves are immoral, and they distinguished the flesh from the spirit. As a matter of fact, immoral conduct depends upon the gratification of the same instincts that come into play in

strictly moral conduct. For example, the acquisitive instinct can be exercised morally or immorally, so can the sex instinct and other instincts. Indeed, vice is frequently only virtue in excess; as when prudence turns into cowardice, courage into rashness, economy into avarice, liberality into prodigality, liberty into licence, submission into slavery, pride into conceit, love of approbation into vanity, and constancy into obstinacy.

The impulses our unconscious propensities give rise to are frequently opposed to our conscious desires, to the conventions of education and experience, and to our general principles; and if this conflict in the mind below the threshold of consciousness is not checked, immoral conduct may be the result. This is what is meant by the struggle between the flesh and the spirit.

Most normal persons are potential moral offenders and law-breakers, for the primitive propensities are common to all mankind. They are, however, not actually immoral, inasmuch as they have developed, in addition, certain inhibitory qualities which enable them to modify and restrain these impulses in accordance with the standards of their society. A man may have strong instincts, such as cupidity, sexuality, aggression; but he has also intelligence, which shows him that the result of such satisfaction will be to harm him in his reputation and liberty because of the injustice and injury he is doing to others, and thus his instincts are regulated. The less numerous and the weaker these inhibitions, the more freely do the feelings and propensities influence the actions of the individual. Therefore, the child, the savage, and persons of little culture are little able to restrain their inclinations.

The difference between a moral citizen and a criminal is frequently merely a matter of self-control. Only people without strong desires and in fortunate circumstances cannot be tempted. Yet even among these there are some who, though they would be horrified at big thefts, will appropriate small articles, like a book or an umbrella, without a tremor; and it is notorious how many people pilfer at the sight of goods exposed in a shop or store. Others commit acts of indiscretion, if not actual crime, through imprudence, an unfortunate fit of passion, poverty and sore need, or from other very pressing external circumstances. Passion obscures reason and reflection for the time being. Such people have fallen once and may never fall again.

Repeated yielding to impulses creates a habit of self-indulgence; repeated resistance builds up a habit of self-control. Indulgence being easier than resistance, bad habits

are more easily contracted than good ones. The crimes and follies of mankind are mainly due to the uncontrolled operation of the propensities. The best of us lack control sometimes. Not because we fail to distinguish right from wrong, which even many insane persons do, but because very few people can resist temptation if it is sufficiently strong. In that case we have to fall back on our quasi-morality—that is, the fear of consequences.

For some people it is the mere desire to please that keeps them moral. For them, the inward reflection of public opinion—what will the others say of this?—becomes the voice of conscience.

Conscience is the desire to do the right thing without hope of reward—sometimes not even caring for the esteem of others or self-esteem, but acting merely from a natural tendency to righteousness. It is the instinctive application to the actions of social life of certain moral ideas with which our parents and teachers have imbued us, and it therefore depends on experience and education for its peculiar phase of activity.

It is absolutely untrue that a man will always do right when he listens to the voice of his conscience. All that we can say is that he will as a general rule do what is considered right in his time and community. For his conscience is the mirror of that general belief, and, on the Continent, it will encourage him to take his family out on a Sunday afternoon to hear some good music in a public restaurant, while in Scotland, at all events at one time, it would make him thrill with horror at the thought of such profanity.

So far as their purely psychological mechanisms are concerned, temptation and conscience are identical, for both are the voice of suppressed desires. The man who is perfectly good could not be tempted, nor can the man completely bad be conscience-stricken. Every temptation is, to some extent, desired; otherwise, why should it tempt us? We are always our own tempters. Therefore, in dealing with moral perverts, say with the drunkard, the point is not to remove the object of his temptation, but to remove his desire.

Many men appear to be moral because they lead a life so monotonous that they rarely meet with temptation and their passions remain dormant. Others live in an environment where they are constantly tempted. Therefore, the question whether one and the same man is to become a saint or a sinner often depends only on external circumstances. Of course, where the desires have never been strong, or have faded with age, it is easy to be moral; but there can be no virtue where

there is no desire, and consequently no temptation. A born eunuch deserves no credit for being a celibate.

Each man has his breaking point. This breaking point varies in different people, and in the same person is different for different temptations ; and if in this direction he is tempted beyond his strength, he will fail.

“ There is so much good in the worst of us,
and so much bad in the best of us,
that it ill behoves any of us
to find fault with the rest of us.”

Let the admirers of the excellence of the human species reflect why, in all ages and in all countries, robberies and murders have been committed ; and why neither education, legislation, nor religion, the prison, hard labour, and the wheel, has yet been able to extirpate these crimes. That in Queen Elizabeth’s time out of every thousand persons born five were actually hanged is a matter of recorded statistics ; yet this severity did not eliminate crime.

Punishment has its uses, but is a superficial method ; for it only destroys certain manifestations of impulses, not the impulses themselves.

“ Regulations and rules
are fences for fools ;
wise men don’t need them ;
the wicked won’t heed them.”

The “ true ” criminal is he who willed the offence, intended the harm, and desired primarily his own gratification. The offence must have been committed without adequate provocation, and the person who committed it must know and appreciate the circumstances in which the act was done.

A momentary temptation may turn a man hitherto honest, but greedy, into a thief. Some men are given to thieving because of the enjoyment which they anticipate the stolen articles will bring them. Others steal merely from the itch of stealing, and from no strong desire of possession ; for they will give away the stolen articles to the first comer. Then there are the kleptomaniacs, who simply collect misappropriated articles, but do not make use of them. They may be honest as a rule ; but they simply cannot withstand the temptation of goods displayed on open counters when they believe themselves unobserved. That such petty thieving is common is proved by the frequency with which articles of value disappear from the cloak-rooms at fashionable functions.

It is for such people that detectives are needed in drapery stores and at exhibitions of wedding presents.

Genuine thieves may be classified into those who rob because they are too idle to work honestly, those who rob because legitimate labour does not reward them with a sufficiency to enable them to satisfy their various passions, and the professional thieves, who are natural gamblers, to whom the laws are simply impediments thrown in their way to prevent them from getting their living.

Gambling is inherent in some people, and may then be compared to drug addiction; for, once started, it grows on one. Even if money is made by it, the winner rarely gains anything, except temporarily; for money thus lightly come by, goes lightly. On the other hand, the loser frequently not only ruins himself, but drags his family with him. Moreover, gambling is one of the commonest incentives to crime—especially embezzlement.

Next to their lack of industry, the most conspicuous characteristic of the morally unstable is their incurable *mendacity*. If in other arts they never rise above the status of amateurs, as liars they take professional rank. The readiness, the resource, the promptitude, the elaborate circumstantiality of their lies are astonishing. The copiousness and unimpeachable efficiency of their excuses—for failing to do what they have undertaken to do—would convince anyone who had no experience of their capability in this direction.

The crimes of educated people are mostly those of *fraud*. Fraudulent people frequently succeed for a time because of their knowledge of mankind; especially because of their knowledge of the most common weakness—i.e., the desire to get rich quickly without doing any work for it. At the basis of fraud is an inherent untruthfulness; and there would be less fraud and less lying if there were less credulity.

The brazen and convincing liars act their parts well, and study an intended victim very shrewdly. However, not all untruthfulness is vicious or criminal. In some people the faculty of imagery is so vivid and strong that they confuse, more or less, the images constructed in the mind with the concrete experiences of the material world. Such people are often fanciful, fantastic, and even untruthful without conscious intention. There is, of course, a vast difference between a falsehood deliberately told and a mis-statement which is the fanciful creation of a fertile imagination. If we exclude deliberate lies, told for selfish ends or from excessive love of approbation, and lies resorted to in order to escape detection

and punishment, the lie may be regarded as the product of a bad imagination.

A good many professional criminals have neither physical nor moral sensibility. Extreme callousness is to the murdering burglar a far more necessary article of equipment than a jemmy or a loaded revolver. The man who is going to reflect how unfair it is to the victim to have his brains battered out for attempting to defend his property had better renounce that line of business. The murderer who shudders at the sight of blood is more likely to kill his victim by poison.

Crime, as a profession, may also be chosen because of its sporting nature, in preference to the more monotonous, tame, toned-down, and humdrum life of good citizenship. It is a gamble that is frequently successful; frequently enough to make it worth his enterprise. The world knows only of his failures.

Not every habitual criminal is a professional criminal. A large number of habitual criminals are morally deficient from earliest childhood. When we examine the morally weak-minded, we shall find that in many cases he was expelled from one school after another for his bad conduct, and that in later life the same incapacity was shown in following any steady profession or in earning a livelihood. Often he is a combination of good and evil, susceptible in the same degree to affection and hatred, selfishness and generosity, honourable and mischievous actions. He lacks control over the instinctive desires, consequently there is no check on extravagant or dangerous acts. When guilty of crime, especially in the case of murder, the plea of insanity is often put forward; but the morally weak-minded is not insane, though he is not normal. If the morally weak-minded were treated in law as insane we should have to empty half of our prisons.

It is otherwise with the mentally deficient. If he is criminal, he is so because of his weak-mindedness; that is, because of his defective mental constitution. He cannot "will" an honest life. Lack of intelligence impairs the capacity to appreciate the nature and consequences of conduct. It may manifest itself only when such a person has to provide for himself and to face the difficulties that meet him in the world. As a rule, work is drudgery to him, for he cannot learn. He may succeed for a long time before he is caught; for often he is cunning, though weak-minded. Cunning is not a sign of intelligence. Even idiots can be very cunning. But not all mental defectives are immoral or criminal. They can be moral, if they have no strong instincts, though they are defectives.

The moral man must have a soul of fine susceptibilities. He who is kind and considerate to all around him cannot be a very bad man. If he is accustomed to sacrifice his own conduct from a natural wish to promote the happiness of others, we are entitled to call him a good man. If, when a man has run his mortal race, we may truly write for his epitaph that he was an affectionate son, a kind husband, and a tender father, we imply a character of fundamental goodness from which other moral qualities may be inferred. If we can add also that he was a true friend and a devoted citizen, in that collocation of parental, conjugal, and social sympathies we describe the full measure of ordinary practical morality. This will be a happy world of ours when so much can be truly said of each and all.

CHAPTER III

Other Types of Men

IN addition to the types of mind already described there are others which require separate description.

In Chapter I I have shown the overwhelming power of fear. Now there are characters in whom fear crystallizes into *suspicion*. Many persons are by nature suspicious. Family life, industrial efficiency, national well-being, can be undermined by suspicion. It is at the root of all discontent. Nothing is so easily caused and increased as suspicion. It can be created by a hint, a gesture, a single phrase. Men can create suspicion when they are unfit for anything else.

Suspicion renders people *secretive*; they penetrate the thoughts of others and try to conceal their own. They are rarely indiscreet, and are generally able to restrain the outward manifestation of their feelings successfully and to take a great interest in the concealed thoughts of others. This is the Sherlock Holmes type. Even small things, slight omissions, and the smallest peculiarities of men have their lessons for them, and are traced to their true source. By the guileless man such things generally go unnoticed. The mind of the secretive man has a familiarity with all underground channels of thought. He knows by instinct what the next move of the rogue is likely to be, and can trip him up. Hence the saying, "Set a thief to catch a thief."

Some men are naturally secretive, prone to duplicity, hypocrisy, and cunning, while others are frank and open. A certain endowment of this power is essential. People who give utterance to every thought and feeling which arises in their minds and confide their private affairs in reckless fashion appear to be both foolish and a nuisance. The man who has a fair share of this power trusts little without good cause, takes little for granted, and consequently is seldom hoodwinked; whereas the frank man is liable to think others equally frank and truthful, and is easily deceived.

Fear in a vulgar, ignorant person may cause him to ape gentility and to pretend to be something better than he is.

The desire to be esteemed is a human quality to which must be credited many of the amenities of social life; but the man who seeks to draw attention to himself by vulgar behaviour and ostentatious display of his wealth or meagre talents is called a *snob*. Considering his limited intellect, nothing can be more ridiculous than the airs of importance which we see him put on, in conjunction with the total want of everything that can command our respect. The novelists and writers of comedy have drawn largely from this source of the ludicrous.

Social success is the snob's one great aim. He has a cringing admiration for something he dimly understands to be "good form" and "the correct thing." However, his vulgar conceptions of life and low estimate of human nature make him toady to his superiors in social rank and be insolent towards those whom he considers his inferiors. He is eager for approbation and inhales with ecstasy the incense of flattery, although profusely offered and often by no very skilful hand. Consequently he will give a pound tip to a waiter, where a shilling would do, to gain the esteem which is denied him by superior men.

The real gentleman likes to pass unnoticed through a crowd; not so the snob. His vanity makes him wish to be conspicuous, and urges him to outward display, with a complete lack of taste. He is easily recognized at public functions. If he entertains at his home, he is lavishly hospitable for no other purpose than to impress his guests with his wealth. He often appears benevolent, but his charity is peculiarly limited, for he will refuse to help a starving man while giving lavishly to objects which will enable him to gain the advertisement which he so much covets.

The snob estimates the wisdom of a man by the income he earns. He worships money and power, but has no respect for mere learning and intellect. He judges the merits of a book that he condescends to look at by its circulation; and that of a picture by the popularity and prosperity of the artist. If in need of professional advice of any kind, he prefers to consult a man with a handle to his name. Therefore, to do business with a snob, or enter into any other relation with him, we must be careful of appearances, imitate him in making a show, keep expensive motors, a large staff of servants, a palatial house lavishly decorated, and so forth; for he esteems a man according to his own standard—by the display he makes.

His one merit is that he will spare no expenditure to give his children a superior education. But he wants his daughters to marry noblemen, and values the title more than character.

If he has a son, he will have him brought up as a gentleman—Eton and Oxford are his aim—with the painful result sometimes that the son will grow to despise his own father. The snob feels this keenly, and it makes him a sadder, though not necessarily a wiser, man.

The opposite to the timid, shy person is the man who is fond of displaying his strength by sheer domination. He boasts with his fists—or whatever substitute for fists can be found. We call such a man a *bully*. Bullying, whatever form it takes, is an effort to gain power, not by intelligently meeting the demands of the situation—co-operating with the other person, trying to understand him, realizing his rights and his possibilities—but by violently dominating the situation.

Another way to escape from reality is by *bluffing*, making a pretence of assurance, covering innate uncertainty or weakness in order to impress others. Like day-dreaming, it is a defence against certain unpleasant facts in life.

Strongly opinionated people sometimes turn into *cranks* when they allow the fixed state of mind to control their lives. Such persons often display some small or great abnormality or peculiarity of personal conduct which distinguishes them from the general run of men. Quite frequently they are persons of promise, richly endowed with imagination, invention, and expression; but, lacking in practical vision and business capacity, they fail in the execution of most of their designs. They are the utopians, the theorists, and the dreamers, who are taken up with beautiful ideas, but seldom accomplish anything.

Another type of instability is the *fanatic*. A fanatic is essentially a person of uneven emotional distribution. His energy, instead of flowing with impassive calm between wide banks, is constricted to a narrow channel of exit, down which it rushes with great violence. Hence come the two main characteristics of fanaticism: immense driving power along one channel, and drought and insufficiency along all others. Still, fanaticism, when it happens by chance to be directed towards some object of genuine public advantage, may be of inestimable value. Political progress has often been largely carried out by persons with some fanatical ingredient. Those who are wholly free from fanaticism can scarcely possess the driving force to break through the formidable obstacles of inertia and established régime.

Other examples of types of men are the optimists and pessimists. The *optimist* is generally a man of active vitality. He looks on the bright side of things, and accordingly sees the

good, lovable, and joyful. His hope is inexhaustible and unlimited. However squalid his circumstances and mean his occupation, he is not merely content, but pleased, to live. To the *pessimist*, on the other hand, there is no joy in life—merely stoical endurance of it. He looks on the dark side of things and sees the evils, hates, strifes, sufferings, failures, shams, and follies in the world. He is convinced that the miseries of life are as numerous as, or more numerous than, its happinesses; that pleasure always brings pain in its train; that a single joy is counterbalanced by many griefs. If faced with two evils, he sees a third.

Men may be divided also into masculine and feminine types. The strong *masculine type* is active, forceful, aggressive; interested in practical affairs; likes to control and direct; aims at power and supremacy, at getting wealth, position, and material things; has vigorous ideas and is tenacious of his opinions and convictions; relentless to opposition; views life and the world generally through his intellect rather than through his emotions; and likes to be admired for his strength, his wisdom, and achievement. The *feminine type* of man is the emotional type, all feeling, impressionable, intuitive, theoretical, imitative, sentimental, gentle, tactful, courteous, patient, submissive rather than assertive. He is more responsive, fastidious, impulsive, more concerned with theories and ideals, and less stable in his convictions and beliefs than the masculine type. He enjoys comfort, elegance, and luxury; loves beauty and quality. He is not fitted for roughing it, lacks determination and persistence, likes sheltered jobs and to work under direction, likes to influence, and is easily upset by lack of appreciation.

Another division (made popular by Jung) is into *extroverts* and *introverts*, or doers and thinkers; the one interested in external objects, the other in internal creations—that is, in ideas, reflections, etc.

The doer is the practical man who studies things of solid use. He has the whole universe as his library. The theoretical man is full of knowledge, mostly derived from books. The doer is given to practical thinking, and knows how to meet actual situations and events; while the theoretical man is best known for his wise thoughts. The latter personality is most frequently seen in philosophers, poets, artists, and the like; that is, in men who can give something of value to the world as the result of their introspection and meditation. The one has an attitude of mind turned chiefly towards external affairs and is attracted to the limelight; the other is guided

by the experience of the inner life, by the facts derived from reflection, and performs best when he is protected from observation, when he is alone. But, though the thinker stands aside from immediate action, he may, and often does, help the world of action in a far-reaching way.

The extrovert is eager and willing to take suggestions. Unpleasant situations stimulate him to attempt to change them. He seeks the company of others. The introvert has his interests and activities centred around himself. Unpleasant situations are likely to make him brood. He thinks people do not understand him; consequently he prefers solitude.

Nearly all men are brought up to fit the convention of the age, making them afraid to go against custom and tradition. Hence the average adult is timid about trying new ways, and is shy of expressing new opinions. He comes to believe that the customs and the views he accepts are those he has freely and intelligently accepted. Often, when presented with radically new ideas—it may be rationalism, birth-control, the abolition of armaments, or even so trifling a matter as a change in the B.B.C. Sunday programme—he either shrinks in dread or gives way to bad temper.

The majority of mankind holds everywhere to uniformity; not only in clothes, but in manners, morals, and the outlook on life; and, consequently, the best and most virtuous man is held to be he who has strictly obeyed the laws of his country, followed the religion of his fathers, educated his children after the manner of his country, and regarded the land of his birth as the best in the world. Thus it is that persons who have never had an idea beyond what their immediate surroundings have brought forth are said to have led a blameless life, and have virtue inscribed in gold on their pretentious tombstones. On the other hand, the exceptional men of genius, those of literary and scientific aims, who have had more brain than was ready to act in a simple reflex manner, but have not conformed to all the customs of society, have been mourned as reprobates. The former lived according to their environment; the latter fashioned the environment to suit their needs and desires. Thus the elect of mankind, the epoch-makers and reformers of all time, have been those who did not respect conditions and surroundings, but conquered them in accordance with their idealistic aims. All the comforts, conveniences, and luxuries of modern life were conceived in the brains of men who broke away from precedent and custom, and who, often in spite of difficulty, opposition, and ridicule, established

a new and better order of things. The men who block progress are those who never believe that anything can be done which has not been done before. The tradition slaves are forgotten; the world builds monuments to the successful tradition destroyers.

Englishmen, as a rule, cling to established institutions and customs. They not only preserve their old furniture and silver, their old wigs, and their prehistoric weights and measures, but they also preserve ancient methods, ancient systems, and ancient laws.

Curious remnants of feudalism are still surviving. For example, medical men are not allowed to practise in certain fashionable squares and roads in London; that is to say, they are not allowed to fix a small name-plate to their front door; and, even in the Harley Street district, a medical man, however eminent—he might be the King's physician or President of the College of Surgeons—may exercise his calling only by the grace of the ground landlord, who issues a special licence to the leaseholder, revocable at six months' notice.

A distinctive characteristic of the Englishman—at least of the educated Englishman—is his "reserve." This often makes him appear unfriendly to strangers, and the observation has not infrequently been made that "just as an Englishman's country-seat has high walls and fences, so has his heart." He must not be addressed by anyone who is not introduced to him; though once a person is acknowledged by him he is most hospitable and hearty. The educated Englishman wants to know all about a man's position in society before he feels safe to be at ease with him. That is why he ignores his neighbours in town, but not in the country, where the history of a newcomer is more readily ascertained.

Other nations—the Americans, for instance—really like meeting fresh people. The Englishman is slow to enlarge his circle of acquaintances. Yet he is willing to join other people in any sport, even when they are not of his caste; and since he has simple tastes and never feels lonely, he can make his home at the far ends of the world.

The great majority of Englishmen are extroverts. They want to get things done, and are therefore less appreciative of mere ideas. Hard, uncompromising facts and a few figures appeal to them more than all the rhetoric of the world.

There was a time when people loved beautiful thoughts expressed in beautiful language, when even letter-writing was an art. Now, most people have time only for motoring, racing, tennis, and golf—anything, in short, which does not involve

the intellect too much. That is why they do not seek literature such as the world's masterpieces, which require deep thought, but prefer something sensational, adventurous, or romantic. The "man in the street" buys more newspapers than any man in the world, but it is to receive the hourly news from the racecourse and to read criminal trials. He prefers the musical play to the drama, unless it be a detective play.

Public schools are criticized for allowing too much time for sports and too little for the acquisition of knowledge for knowledge' sake. There is one achievement, however, to their credit. They have developed a "code of honour" in boys and the manners of a "gentleman," in which respect the Englishman is a pattern to all the world.

The corporate spirit is fostered in public schools; individualism is furthered more in universities. More English students now complete their studies in foreign countries, which not only increases their knowledge, but broadens their outlook.

A serious defect of English education is that it is largely sacrificed to examination. Of course there must be some test of the pupil's acquisition; but the complaint is that there is little training to inspire love of knowledge for its own sake, and that even the teachers are controlled by the examiners. Boys have to read to cram, not to assimilate; whereas formerly one could learn much or learn nothing, but one could not learn superficially.

There is a tremendous worship of initials appended to a person's name. Only men with certain degrees—that is, men who have passed certain examinations—can find employment in official situations. The man with real originality and strength of character, whose brain is not adapted to the process of examining, has to become a "free lance."

Still, there is opportunity for all who possess the necessary brains. Many of the great men of England have been self-educated men. For example, a good many Labour Members of Parliament have been miners and manual workers in their youth, and several have become as good statesmen as were their predecessors who had the advantage of a university education. Neither the present Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, nor the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Philip Snowden, received more than an elementary education.

Many giants in the business world are examples of triumph over adverse conditions; of education gained in spite of poverty; of great ends secured in the face of seemingly overwhelming difficulties. Such self-made men have usually more personality than the educated men of superior class.

That is because self-made men have developed their mental powers by force of circumstances, in spite of either friends or enemies; while educated men very often have friends to assist them in gaining a position, and sustaining themselves in it when gained. On the other hand, the sons of self-made men are frequently failures for the same reason. Being brought up in luxury, their character is starved for want of adequate stimulus.

The Englishman is still as resourceful and plucky, hardy, tough, and venturesome as ever he was; but there being no fresh worlds to conquer, and competition being keen in the old places, only the ablest can succeed. Consequently the possession of character is no longer enough; knowledge is what is needed now.

CHAPTER IV

Human Suggestibility

ONE peculiarity of human character which has perhaps been studied more than any other is the power the process of suggestion has upon it. Suggestibility is a characteristic of human beings; without it social life would be impossible. Everyone is naturally suggestible. We could never think or do anything if we were to wait until each reason for our thoughts or deeds had been proved. We all believe in things which we cannot demonstrate, but which we accept in good faith. It is true that some people boast of believing only that which is demonstrable to their senses; but the senses are often deceived by false perceptions. Thus are we constantly misled; and especially so when we are in a state of expectancy. Even renowned men of science, trained to mathematical accuracy, have seen under the microscope that for which they were looking, and which, as subsequently proved by others, could not have been there.

Human suggestibility enters into every act of life, colours all our sensations with the most varied tints, leads our judgment astray, and creates those continual illusions against which we have so much difficulty in defending ourselves even when we exert all the strength of our reason. As soon as we leave the firm ground of mathematics, we experience an incredible difficulty in resisting suggestion. When we formulate an opinion, or allow ourselves to be persuaded, it is but rarely that logic is the only ground. The feelings, affection, esteem, the awe and fear which a speaker inspires in us, surreptitiously prepare the paths of our understanding, and our reason is often taken in a trap.

The degree of pleasure we get from life depends more on our suggestibility than on any other factor. Some people can be happy in conditions where others would be miserable, and millionaires have been known to commit suicide because of the loss of a comparatively small portion of their fortune; often merely from fear of loss, and not actual loss. Books are bought because of their suggestive titles; fashionable

clothes are worn because of the suggestion of wealth and respectability. Certain foods, the habit of open or closed windows, and other idiosyncrasies and hobbies, often create pleasure and comfort, or displeasure and discomfort, not because of their actual effects, but by suggestion. Some people feel already seasick when the ship is still lying motionless in the harbour. It is also well known that the auto-suggestion of fear, in the case of epidemics, renders one more liable to contagion.

Moreover, suggestion lies at the foundation of all forms of moral and religious teaching. It is, in fact, the basis of education. It has been practised on all of us, sometimes reinforced by the application of more or less violent bodily stimuli, which helped to impress the suggestion more deeply on our minds.

One of the best examples of the effect of suggestion, to the extent of its becoming an obsession, is that of a person who has fallen in love. The man or woman who has induced this state of mind exercises a strong fascination over the subject, resulting in complete blindness to the attractions of all other persons and to the physical and mental defects of the object of adoration. Men in love sometimes change the habits of a lifetime, break with their own relations, dismiss their most faithful servants, ruin themselves financially, give up their club and their tobacco, and may even change their politics and religion. Simultaneously with these mental changes there are often definite physical symptoms, affecting the respiration, circulation, digestion, and sleep: and, if these are neglected, it is not at all uncommon for the lover to fall ill.

There are certain classes of persons whose intellectual labours are characterized by suggestibility in a marked degree. Poets and artists are the most conspicuous examples. An artist's power depends on how much of his inner nature he can express in his pictures or sculptures to impress the observer. His success depends, to some extent, on his power to create particular feelings in those who contemplate his work. Of all the works of art none acts so powerfully on our emotions as that of a musical genius. Musical sounds have a mysterious language of their own, which human beings and even some animals intuitively understand, and to which they immediately respond. What is true of the painter and music composer is also true of the writer. Language, written or spoken, derives its power from what it suggests to us. What can flatter an author more than to hear that his novel has made men and women laugh or weep; or was effective in creating good morals

or wicked conduct? After the publication of Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther* there was quite an epidemic of suicides in Germany.

And what is the object of the dramatist and actor but to suggest certain thoughts and feelings to the audience, and to make them think, laugh, or cry? And although the transferred emotion may be suppressed, and usually is not lasting, with a few it is sometimes strong enough to prevent the enjoyment of supper and sleep that night.

Even in business suggestion plays an important rôle. A good salesman will try, first, to gain the customer's attention and confidence, then to arouse his interest, and, finally, to awaken desire. The art of advertising depends mainly on its power of suggestion.

In politics, as in daily life, people follow a leader, sometimes against their real interest and convictions. Think of the extraordinary influence of a strong personality like Napoleon, Bismarck, Gladstone, or Mussolini. Every party leader knows that a few cleverly chosen words may suggest a political truth, or untruth, to a mass of people who do not stop to ascertain their motive or reason, but follow like a flock of sheep.

The power of the Press to produce a desired body of public opinion, merely by the endless repetition of certain carefully selected phrases, was well illustrated before and during the Great War.

Just as in the Middle Ages there arose epidemics of hysteria, so it sometimes happens that a whole country loses its political judgment by some powerful suggestion that blows like a wind of folly over the land. Indeed, whether we are dealing with social, religious, or political events, or with artistic tendencies, or currents of scientific thought, the suggestibility of crowds throws light on many phenomena. It is feeling, not reason, that sways large gatherings of people. Mobs will commit acts that no member of them would think of perpetrating individually. That is how mass "fury" and mass "enthusiasm" are infectious.

Moreover, our character acts on us as a constant suggestion. Every man, of necessity, sees other men, and Nature itself, through the prism of his own individuality. Thus the pessimist is convinced deeply that evil is everywhere, when it is, in fact, within himself.

It is a peculiarity of the subconscious mind that it is highly amenable to suggestion. It receives suggestions not only from external sources, but from the conscious mind itself, and it gives suggestions, not only from our past experiences, but

from the experiences transmitted from our forefathers. Looked at in this light, heredity may be regarded as a mass of potent suggestions transmitted from our ancestors. We do not inherit qualities ready made, such as virtues and vices; we only get from our parents more or less well-constituted brains, capable of reacting, more or less promptly and accurately, to the various stimuli which cause their activity. Suppose, for instance, an infant to be born with a predominant tendency to the feeling of fear; that feeling, as reason develops, will become intellectualized; and, if no counteracting tendency is present, it will form the ruling idea for his guidance, it will act as a potent suggestion, and his characteristic will be *circumspection*. And so all our deep-seated feelings and instincts can become intellectual qualities, which we think we make for ourselves, whereas in reality they are hereditary suggestions to determine our conduct.

Children are almost purely subjective, and no one needs to be told how completely a suggestion, true or false, will take control of their minds. Their good manners are easily destroyed by bad company, and their minds can be corrupted by what they see, hear, and read.

Looked at in this manner, it will be seen that we are a mass of suggestions—suggestions from within and suggestions from without. One can overcome the other, but it may be laid down at once that external suggestions act on us more readily when they are in harmony with our internal ones—that is, when they are in harmony with those auto-suggestions which conform with our natural character. When the subconscious mind is confronted by two opposing suggestions, the hereditary auto-suggestion and the suggestive influence of another person, the stronger necessarily prevails. Thus a man with settled moral principles will successfully resist the suggestions of crime and immorality, for his moral principles constitute auto-suggestions the strength of which is proportionate to that of his moral character.

Suggestion, in the widest sense, can be direct or indirect; but direct persuasion is not usually regarded as suggestion. As Prof. Bechtereiv has cleverly said: "Suggestion enters into the understanding by the back stairs, while logical persuasion knocks at the front door."

The expression "suggestion" betokens nothing more than an idea selected by ourselves and prominently held before the mind, or conveyed from outside sources, and accepted by us, because it is more or less in harmony with our own ideas and dispositions and prevailing moods; and forming the

initial point of further processes of thought, or leading to action in accordance with the object of the idea.

Indirect suggestion often acts more powerfully, because the subject is unconscious of the fact that an attempt is being made to modify his views. If a man tells another that Mr. So-and-so, in whom he has complete confidence, is a cheat, the suggestion will be resented; but if he gradually raises a doubt in his friend's mind, the former trust is likely to be shaken. In addition, such new idea, introduced almost unnoticed, is likely to lie latent for a period; and when it does assert itself it will appear to the subject to have originated within himself.

Suggestibility is increased in illness, in fatigue, and in periods of mental tension—in all states, in short, that tend to obscure or divert the reasoning function. These are conditions of emotional susceptibility; the emotions become more acute, and the emotions dazzle; they do not enlighten the understanding. One sees more clearly in fair weather than in storm. In periods of depression we are especially open to unhappy suggestions; and in periods of success to all that is hopeful and promising.

The sick person is always more emotional and suggestible, and consequently he clutches eagerly at any remedy, preferably the mysterious, that chance brings within his reach. In all forms of mental healing, suggestion and faith are in the patient himself, not in the agency—whether that be a properly qualified person, a lay healer, a shrine, a sacred spring, an amulet, a "rheumatic ring," or what not.

All forms of faith-healing, indeed all forms of psychotherapy, depend on the fact that the bodily functions can be affected by a mental act. Many functional disorders are of a mental origin. Even where there are physical causes producing organic disease, the mind, by being centred on the ailing part, is apt to aggravate the pathological process and increase and prolong the severity of the symptoms.

If a thought alone, in an instant of time, can dilate or contract a blood-vessel, and cause paleness or blushing; if it can hasten or retard the action of the heart and quicken or slow the pulse rate; if it can abolish the appetite and increase the action of the kidneys or bowels; if it can produce insomnia and bodily weakness; if it can force tears from the eyes and turn the hair grey in a single night—we need not be surprised that the psychotherapist can bring about a mental condition in the patient which will influence the bodily functions for good by introducing such thoughts and creating such an

emotional atmosphere as will put a sick person in the right mental condition.

We see the power of suggestion in the ancient healing ceremonies and invocations of the gods by the Egyptian priests; the magic formulae of the disciples of Asklepios; the King's touch for the cure of special diseases; the cures of the faithful at Lourdes; the miraculous success of such men as Great-rakes, Gassner, and the Abbot Prince of Hohenlohe; and, in modern times, the curious faith and prayer cure of the "Christian Scientists."

Ancient medicine, which was in the hands of the priests, and in which many more or less impressive ceremonies and paraphernalia were used, is full of this mental influence. In ancient Egypt the sick were laid in the temple of Isis to await the voice of the oracle which should reveal to them the means of cure. Similar was the faith-healing practised in the temples of ancient Greece. The imagination was strongly stimulated by processions to the accompaniment of music, by prayers, and by the sanctity of the surroundings. Instead of the god exercising his power of healing directly, in answer to the prayers of the afflicted believers, he helped them indirectly, by revealing to them, while they spent the night in the holy place, something in their dreams that would cure them.

From what is known of the apparently miraculous performances of the Sibyls among the Romans, the long vigils and fastings, and the peculiar attitudes and manners of these wonder-workers, there can be little doubt that, by various means kept secret from the multitude, a condition similar to, if not identical with, the hypnotic state was induced.

With the decay of the Roman Empire and the growth of Christianity religious psychotherapeutics obtained favour again. Prayers, exorcisms, anointments, consecrated herbs and holy water, the laying on of hands, pilgrimages to the graves of saints, etc., were all measures of suggestion and faith-healing. They were greatly favoured by the belief in witches and obsession by the evil spirit which prevailed in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries.

Even the external side of the ritualistic prayer, the bent knee, the closed eye, and other bodily postures, commonly used in worship, by concentrating the attention, have a decidedly helpful effect in bringing about a sort of hypnotic attitude of mind. The concentrated gaze of the Indian Yogi does much the same thing. As in the case of the hypnotized subject looking at a bright object, so in that of the man in

religious ecstasy fixing the gaze upon the skies or some holy image—the mind is so concentrated that it is freed from all earthly concerns, and no bodily reaction or pain is felt.

So long as people feared supernatural powers they believed that epidemics were punishments for sin, and could be mitigated by prayers. That is why epidemics continued for so long, but after it was shown that they were caused by micro-organisms they tended to cease. And just as the earliest conception of disease in ancient times seems to have been that evil spirits took possession of the body, so, in Christian times, many of the diseases, especially those of a mental kind, were believed to be due to the evil influence of Satan. Even such an able philosopher as Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) assures us that diseases, like tempests, are the direct acts of the devil, who can transport men at his pleasure through air, and can transform them into any shape. Martin Luther, two centuries later, was quite sure that mental disease was caused by Satan, and he exorcised the sufferers. The same servitude to the mere letter of the Scriptures made the famous preacher John Wesley, in more recent times (the eighteenth century), declare that bodily diseases are sometimes caused by devils, and that "most lunatics are really demoniacs."

This notion of the causation of disease led naturally to a system of treatment directed to the dislodgment of the intruder. To that end, every effort was made to make the usurped abode as unpleasant as possible. The patient was beaten, smoked with evil-smelling substances, and drenched with every foul thing that the savage imagination could think of. In fact, men treated those believed to have the devil in them as they would have treated the devil in person, could they have had the good fortune to lay hold of him. As Maudsley has said : "The tortures which the insane person suffered from the devils that had entered into him were less than those inflicted by the devils who took charge of him."

The belief in diabolical agency was an ever-present terror, and from this fatal superstition arose the witchcraft delusion, which acquired a fresh intensity from the religious excitement attendant upon the Reformation. In Spain, according to Llorente, 31,000 persons were burnt alive; and the number executed in England alone has been estimated at altogether some 40,000. With the laws passed against witchcraft in 1736 its punishment by death gradually died out in this country.

It may be said that these were times when people were not

so enlightened. But are people really any wiser and less influenced by supernatural beliefs at the present day? Let us take that wonder-working centre, Lourdes, for example. It is never without its pilgrims supplicating the Virgin Mary to reverse the sentence of death, or permanent disablement, supposed to be pronounced upon them by the medical faculty. At the height of the season, in August and September, one may see from twenty to thirty train-loads of people arriving and departing daily, religious services in full swing at the famous grotto and in the chapel overhead, all day and all night, conducted by relays of priests before successive congregations of worshippers and sufferers, all hoping to catch a breath of that special virtue which is supposed to descend upon the faithful and the truly believing. In the words of one of the visitors: "It is only when all the machinery of miracles is in motion, when the little town nestling in its Pyrenæan valley is full of chanting processions of pilgrims, when the healing waters are surrounded by hundreds of the halt, the lame, the blind, imploring Heaven to cure them of their ills, and waiting momentarily with passionate faith for a miracle to be wrought in their favour, that one can realize what place Lourdes holds in the religious world. It is the spot of all others on earth where the vault of Heaven is opened to the eye of the believer, where he can discern the far-off glory of the Throne and the radiant company of the saints, and where he feels he can make something of a personal and direct appeal to the Heavenly powers for the relief of his own puny and individual sufferings on earth."

The large congregation of pilgrims passes, one by one, through the Grotto, kissing the bare rock, and clinging to it reverently, as long as they can, under the vigilant eye of the overseer, who keeps them moving on. After kissing the rock it is the proper course to drink at the spring; and all sorts of lips touch the tin pannikins in which the water is served. The poor pilgrims have no fear of infection, however. To them Lourdes is sacred. A piercing cry for Heaven's pity goes up from the ailing throng in response to the priest's exhortations. Some have been there year after year, and if they have not found favour with the Holy Virgin before, they are convinced that it must be by reason of their unworthiness.

Next comes the dipping in the piscines, which, like the pool of Siloam, are supposed to effect the miraculous healing. They are closed baths, receiving their water from the holy spring. Appeals to Heaven are made, in every key of supplication, by the officiating priest. The crowd is ordered

by him to kneel, to fold their hands, to kiss the earth; the praying becomes more and more fervent and thrilling—one would almost suppose that a miracle was to be wrung from Heaven by dint of entreaty. At the climax of the scene there is sure to be some voice exclaiming that he or she is cured, whereat the "Magnificat" bursts forth from a thousand throats, while the attendants help the object of the miracle to reach the *Bureau des Constatations* hard by, where a medical man tests the case, according to such information as can be given him. Too often the supposed cure is only a temporary exaltation, something of the nature every hypnotist can witness, as when a lame man is made to walk without his crutches, making by sheer force of faith better use of his paralyzed muscles than he could do in his normal state; but the effect is, of course, not lasting.

Occasionally a real cure is recorded; but it is a curious fact that the officiating physician and President of the *Bureau des Constatations*, Dr. E. Le Bec, in his book entitled "Medical Proof of the Miraculous" (1922), can only give twelve cases drawn from the official records—ranging in date over such a long period as 1875 to 1913—in evidence of the action of a supernatural power. True, they are all medically attested, and all of them were cured spontaneously. One patient, for example, with a suppurating fracture of the leg of eight years' duration, sat down on a seat at the Grotto, felt something happening, and got up and walked. The two wounds were cicatrized, and the bones were solidly united. There are cases of cancerous growth, even club feet, cured; sometimes in a flash, sometimes in a few hours. Let us confess that these stories have the appearance of truth, and that, if true, we are confronted with a phenomenon that needs explanation.

The explanation offered by Dr. Le Bec is that of a supernatural power. "At Lourdes," he says, "these wonderful cures compel the recognition of a mysterious force emanating from the Holy Eucharist. It may be affirmed that the Divine Physician manifests His omnipotence, at the moment of His passing, to prove to men, by supernatural signs within the grasp of their senses, the reality of His presence under the sacramental species."

This belief is stultified by the fact that it is only at Lourdes that the miraculous power of the Host is manifested; the doctrine of the Real Presence is therefore invalid generally throughout the Catholic community. Besides, cure No. 3 occurred not at Lourdes, but at the asylum of La Teppe, after "a fervent Communion and earnest prayers to our Lady

of Lourdes." Case No. 10, living at Anglet, was cured of recurrent cancer of the cheek, not at Lourdes, but at home, by the *prayers of his daughter* to our Lady at Lourdes. Case No. 11, suffering from recurrent cancer of the tongue, was cured at Toulouse, by *bathing the mouth* with Lourdes water.

Dr. Le Bec, of course, is stating a case for the manifestation of Divine Providence at Lourdes, and he makes short work of all the usual explanations. The cures, he says, cannot be explained by suggestion as ordinarily understood, for case No. 1 was a priest ordered to go to Lourdes by his Archbishop, but he went without any confidence that he would be cured; case No. 10, an old gendarme of Anglet, is reported as also unbelieving, yet his doctor certified that "Clement and his daughter decided to ask for a cure from our Lady of Lourdes." A patient may go to Lourdes with a sceptical, or at least a doubtful, mind; yet his "spirit" may be moved by the scenes he witnesses. Only case No. 7, a little girl, age twenty-two months, whose club feet were cured after her third bath, cannot be explained in this manner.

Some of the cases have been discussed at meetings of medical men, and what emerges from these discussions is that the physiological processes involved are those of repair, not of restoration. This "supernatural force" does not set a fractured limb, but consolidates it; ulcers and fistulæ are healed by scar tissue, and so on; indeed, in reference to scarring, it is suggested that, "If one may be permitted to say such a thing, it is as if God wishes to leave very definite evidence of the disease that has been cured." Evidently God has not the surgeon's pride in healing "by first intention." The fact that we are in the presence of natural processes of repair, although abnormally accelerated, suffices to show that no supernatural force need be invoked.

That miraculous cures do take place, all the faithful believe, and why not? Why should there not be a few remarkable cures out of all that throng that visits Lourdes every year? Sudden recoveries of patients, considered to be beyond all aid, do occur sometimes even in legitimate medical practice.

As in Greek times to the temples of Asklepios, so in the Middle Ages crowds repaired to the shrines of saints and expected miraculous cures. To touch the tomb of some reputed holy man, to kiss the floor on which he had trod, a bone from his supposed skeleton, were believed to achieve as great things as faith in the living God. It is not the relic that brings about the cure; for "you can calmly put in the place of his bones those of any other skeleton, the cure would

follow if the patient were ignorant of the change." Such was the opinion of a celebrated physician and philosopher, Pompianus (1516). Ordinary water will be as beneficial in its effects as that of Lourdes, provided that the invalid is not aware of its origin. Granted that some of the cures at holy shrines are genuine, their effect in restoring health is produced by the inspiring ceremony and surroundings, which fill the patient's mind with wonder, awe, and hope, in place of injurious thoughts and emotions.

Sick people are often keener to have their symptoms removed than their disease; but symptoms are delusive. The most urgent symptom is pain. Pain is real to the patient, but it is not the disease. It is a sensation from some part of the body—not always the ailing part—conveyed to the brain. Pain, for example, may be felt in the big toe long after the whole leg has been amputated. Even when there is no question of the locality of the trouble, as in toothache, it sometimes happens that when the afflicted person rings the dentist's front-door bell all pain suddenly vanishes. But if toothache can pass away in such a mysterious manner, so can other symptoms.

There is, therefore, nothing absurd in Christian Science—only its methods and explanations. It follows a very simple therapeutic system, from which diagnosis is excluded; and it employs only one remedy. It is so simple that it has succeeded in founding cathedrals, hundreds of churches, and in comforting millions.

The Christian Science healer makes it an act of faith that God will maintain the patient in the higher condition of being and free the patient's material body from the errors of sin and sickness. The process on the part of the Christian Scientist would seem to consist in first putting himself into this mental attitude, and then in the application of a form of very ordinary suggestion—namely, the flat contradiction of every symptom, mental or physical, of which the patient complains. He may also pray silently, and may endeavour to obtain faith in the healing power of God. He refuses to discuss any symptoms or treatment, or to name the disease, or to talk it over in any way. The Christian Scientist tells the dying man, whose very heart-beats can be numbered, that he is not dying, and need not, and ought not to die. He converses and argues, by the week or month, with the cancer patient, while the disease takes its course. He claims a "certain cure for all diseases," while he repudiates both any knowledge of disease and any necessity for that knowledge.

The so-called "absent treatment" by Christian Scientists is also nothing but suggestion. A healer advertises; a would-be patient responds and pays the required fee. He is notified that at certain hours the healer will treat him. He is ready enough to believe it, and if his faith really does bring him some relief he has done the work himself; and, except by the appeal to the patient's credulity, the healer had nothing whatever to do with the cure.

Christian Science, like any other belief in the supernatural, may be a comfort to some people and keep them "good," and, if they lead the simple life, may even keep them healthy. The harm it does is by leading credulous, ignorant, and helpless sick people to believe that miracles can be worked by spiritual forces, and that physical means can be entirely neglected. What is to be resented is the effect of their teaching and practices in cases of organic disease and injury—their meddling with medicine, not their muddling with metaphysics.

Rational psychotherapeutics, practised by properly qualified experts, is rapidly spreading, and there is no need for any patient nowadays, whether suffering from physical, mental, or moral ills, to seek the aid of persons unqualified in the science of medicine.

CHAPTER V

Human Credulity

PREHISTORIC man imagined that in his dreams something left his body, and that this same something returned to his body before he awoke. He noticed also that in his dreams he appeared often to be far away, or other people seemed to come to him and since he knew by experience that his body never moved, his perfectly natural explanation was that it was something which inhabited his body—a spirit, a natural shadowy image of himself—which would go out and return again. This spirit he at first identified with the breath of the body, since the dead man no longer breathes. It was also natural that he should think that this spirit does not die with the body, but lives on after quitting it; for, although a man may be dead and buried, his phantom-figure may continue to appear to the survivors in dreams and visions. In time this spiritual entity was regarded as the soul, dwelling in the body of man and presiding over its functions. It was in no way absolutely attached to the organism, but had a life of its own.

I have shown in my work "In Search of the Soul" (1920) that the belief in the soul was universal until the beginning of the nineteenth century, and greatly hindered the progress of scientific knowledge of the brain and mind, as is evident from the fact that physiologists were then still attempting to discover its seat; generally in one of the central structures at the base of the brain.

Being surrounded by elements and forces of nature which he could neither comprehend nor control, primitive man saw spirits everywhere. They constituted his interpretation of nature for the time being. To him they were symbols of the unknown and mighty powers by which he was surrounded, and before which he stood unprotected, helpless, and trembling. Indeed, until accidents and experiments led to the discovery of the laws of nature the causes of phenomena were sought in the action of powerful but invisible beings.

Not being able to see beyond the sky, man assumed a region above it, where the gods dwelt, and whither those were going who in their earthly life had made themselves worthy of such bliss. And thus he pictured to himself a heaven shut off from earth, from all its sins and cares—a place of peace, of light and repose. On the other hand, there are forces in nature which caused him to be terror-stricken, which made him assume malignant spirits, whose habitation he thought was in the dark regions beneath the ground—far away from the realms of light—a region from which, through the volcano, smoke and burning sulphur were cast into this upper world—a place of everlasting fire and darkness. Placed between the boundaries of such opposing powers, he felt himself the sport of circumstances, sustained by beings who sought his happiness, and tempted by those who desired his destruction.

In the early days of mankind it is obvious that death would be, in the great majority of instances, violent and premature. Such death, occurring in the vigour of manhood, when its bounding energies are most active, would, almost of necessity, lead to the conclusion that the unfinished life would be continued elsewhere. Thus originated the more or less general expectation and belief in a future life; just as later, when man lived in civilized communities, he had to suffer so many injustices and unequal hardships that he found comfort in the belief that human personality survives beyond the grave; and this belief in immortality was probably fostered because of the influence it had on the conduct of men.

It is only natural that primitive man should have believed that in a future life good men would enjoy the society of good beings like themselves, the evil ones being dismissed to the realms of darkness and despair. And as human experience teaches us that a final allotment can be made only by some superior power, he expected that he who was his creator would also be his judge, and that there was an appointed time and a bar at which the final destination of all who have lived should be ascertained, and eternal justice measure out its punishments and rewards. Primitive man had no knowledge that the world was to last a hundred million years, and that, if judgment day there be, it would entail a long, cruel suspense.

It is remarkable, too, that only punishment was so impressively held up to man's view, but not reward. Pictures of paradise were conceived much less rich and varied than those of hell, and its joys peculiarly modest. The inventive powers of painters, sculptors, and poets did not rise above a beautifully illuminated hall, where the blessed are ranged around God's

throne, and, with folded hands, sing hymns of praise, while angels play a musical accompaniment.

To the early Christians, in accordance with the beliefs of their time, every phenomenon of nature was an independent act of divine power needing no further enquiry. Nevertheless they sometimes made a fervent appeal to God to alter or suspend the very laws which he had created; whereas to-day rationalists regard the world as an ordered system of inviolable laws, which it is their business to discover and make use of. If there had been no people to doubt, there would have been no enquiry, and we should still believe that the sun moved round the earth.

Who made the Universe? What is the origin and purpose of life? Whither are we going? Such and similar questions have been the wonderment of mankind throughout the ages; and it was the theologians who did not hesitate to give a reply. True, it was a fictitious one, but it was the best they could give to troubled minds in the prevailing state of ignorance. People, thinking their prophets and priests favoured by God and inspired by Him, accepted these explanations; and thus was arrested the natural impulse to win, through effort and mistakes, a real insight into the connection of phenomena.

Theologians are now busy giving new interpretations to inspired Scriptures, seeking new meanings for old phrases; and Canons, Deans, and Bishops are writing on Church History and the fundamental dogmas of Christianity, in newspapers and popular magazines, with a freedom which would have astonished former generations. The way ancient theological beliefs (which must be distinguished from pure religion) are kept alive is by children being brought up in accordance with the creed of their parents, a creed in which the parents themselves may no longer believe, yet which every child is taught to accept in full, and in regard to which he acquires complexes which, however much they may be assailed by the facts of science, are difficult to dislodge.

Much that passes as religion is based on the inspirations and visions of religious ecstasies. Just as the hypnotic subject can be made to see things which have no real existence, so the religious ecstatic could, by an act of mental abstraction, see angels and spirits, in accordance with his belief. But we have learned since, by actual experiment, that anyone viewing an object intently, or concentrating his mind on an imaginary object, and then looking at a blank wall, can see that object with all the brightness and distinctness of reality. It has also

been found that expectation has a great deal to do with the form a vision will take.

People do not see ghosts nowadays when they cross church-yards by night as they used to do in former times, because, not believing in ghosts, they do not expect to see a ghost step solemnly forth from behind a tombstone, or glide away like a guilty thing ashamed.

That the martyrs of old and the religious ecstasies must have been in a condition of self-hypnosis has been demonstrated again, recently, by the "wonder" girl, Therese Neumann, of Kornersreuth, in Germany, who has been examined by numerous physicians and psychologists as well as by official authorities. She is a plain, normal, peasant girl, who ordinarily talks and behaves in quite a natural manner, but who at times goes into ecstasy, has visions of the crucifixion of Christ, claims to feel the sufferings of Jesus, sheds tears of blood, and bleeds from hands and feet.

Therese Neumann resembles in many respects another devout Catholic and well-known stigmatic—Louise Lateau, of Bois d'Haine, near Mons, who was much talked of sixty years ago. She also could bleed from different parts of the body, which she knew corresponded to the wounds of Christ, by concentrating her attention upon them. The Commission, appointed in 1874 by the Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium, to enquire into her case took every possible precaution to detect fraud, and came unanimously to the conclusion that "the stigmata and ecstasies are real" and that "they can be explained physiologically."

Indeed, there is no need to ascribe the phenomena of stigmatization either to deception or to a miracle, for we have a sufficient explanation in the process of self-hypnosis induced by intense concentration and spiritual exaltation. Many hypnotists—Charcot, Liébault, Delbœuf, Forel, Jendrassik, and Kraft-Ebing—have produced results of a similar kind in subjects they experimented upon.

Nowadays people do not long so much for immortality, if that immortality be in spirit form, a shadow of their former selves. What most people have in mind is a continuance of the present life in the next world; better, if possible, but, in any case, with their present individuality and all the memories of the past. They never ask themselves what they have done that would be worthy of remembrance.

They have no desire to enter the Kingdom of Heaven if that means giving up all earthly interests and does not lead to a reunion with departed friends. It is this belief

in personal survival which is such a consolation to the bereaved. But consciousness and mental life are bound up with the physical body and its environment, and change from day to day, so that if removed to other spheres we can no longer be the same. The needs of material life, the pursuits of wealth and happiness, the joys and bitterness of this world—and all that went to make up life—have vanished.

If the whole personality survives, then our animal appetites, which form our main daily concerns, must be preserved too. On the other hand, if the instincts and passions that we have in common with animals are left behind us in the grave, then our personality is no longer the same.

All our faculties are fashioned for the sphere in which they now act. What is there for them to do in a sphere in which there is nothing material, no ignorance to be removed, no intellectual problem to be solved, no suffering to be relieved, no justice to be performed ? If we are all to lead a heavenly existence, then the personality as known on earth must disappear and our spirits become more or less alike.

On the other hand, if the personality is preserved hereafter, it may well be asked what becomes of the imbeciles and insane, and those who have inherited a defective constitution, leading them to vice and crime.

If there is an independent spirit in us, how was it created ? When did it assume personality except in life ? If it is immortal, it must have had a pre-existence. Has anyone come across the spirit of a person who was not yet born ?

Men still profess to believe, and persuade themselves that they believe, in a future life ; but in their hearts they feel that it is a long way off, and that, on the whole, there is a good deal of uncertainty about it. No promise of a glorious hereafter will now cozen men into accepting the unnecessary miseries of their present existence. The only interest that is taken in the problem is by spiritists, who claim that the whole of our present life and surroundings is transplanted to a region very near to us, and that we can get in communication with our departed friends through the intervention of a medium, one on this and one on the other side, very much the same as the business-man rings up his client by telephone.

I have already explained that the subconscious mind has the peculiarity that it is very susceptible to suggestion, not only by the words expressed, but also by the emotional atmosphere created. In hypnosis, for example, we can influence the subconscious mind by suggesting, let us say, the presence of a brother who, for all we know, may be in

India or elsewhere at the time, and the subject will actually see and feel the brother, and may embrace him, as if he had a real existence. We can also create an emotional atmosphere of joy or sadness, and the subject will invariably add other elements in harmony with the mental condition thus produced.

It is also well known, or was at all events to the mesmerists of old, that a person in a state of hypnosis may read the thoughts of people present. Those who have witnessed experiments of this kind explain them on the hypothesis that minds in a state of subconsciousness can communicate with each other. Admitted that this subject is still very obscure, we may yet keep that possibility in our memory, in view of what takes place at spirit séances.

First of all, the visitor may or may not be a professed believer in spiritualism: but the fact that he is there to consult a medium shows a faith sufficient for the purpose in view. After a few hymns are sung to produce a suitable emotional state and the lights are turned down, in order to obtain the proper conditions, the medium goes into the subjective or subconscious condition; that is to say, he goes into a trance, similar to the hypnotic state, while the visitor's mind is full of anticipation and hope that he will be put into direct communication with his loved and lost ones.

The same conditions prevail at bigger meetings. Not only is the medium in a state of trance, but the preliminaries to a séance are usually conducive to the generation of a state of subconsciousness, or semi-consciousness, in all those present, due to the intense concentration of attention; exactly as in hypnosis. There is the darkness, to shut out all other impressions on the senses; and there is often slow music, and singing of hymns, which facilitate the right emotional atmosphere.

It is asserted that at these séances a person is often described of whom the sitter has not thought for years, and who was utterly unknown to the medium, and that this disproves the possibility of mind-reading: but it does nothing of the kind, for mind-reading is the communion of two subconscious or subjective minds, and the objective or conscious thoughts of the sitter have no necessary effect upon the character of the communications. Neither is there any evidential value in the fact that the sitter cannot remember an incident related by the medium, for the objective memory retains little of the incidents of life, while the subjective mind retains all.

When people really believed in spirits, they believed that angels pushed the planets along; and it says something for the advance of knowledge that spirits are now limited to

furniture. Often the spirits manifest their presence by "levitation"—making a piano or other object float in the air; or by the playing of musical instruments by invisible hands. Allowing that there may be a still unknown dynamic force somewhere that is capable of moving ponderable objects without physical contact, the presence of a force capable of producing abnormal physical effects is no evidence of survival after death; still less of the presence of "spirits." Again, we can produce similar effects on hypnotized subjects. They see floating objects if they are suggested to them; but the operator, and those present who keep a conscious critical mind, will be aware of the hallucination.

Another phenomenon sometimes produced at séances is the luminous appearance of persons present. This is a common occurrence at hypnotic experimental performances. If the room is in absolute darkness, the subject will often describe the position of the operator by the luminosity which surrounds him, and see faint lights emanating from the points of his fingers.

Still another practice of spiritists is that of automatic writing. It consists in holding a pencil in the hand and letting it write the supposed message of spirits. This has been minutely studied by psychologists and there is no longer any doubt that it is the subjective mind which assumes control of the muscles and nerves of the arm and hand and propels the pencil, the objective mind meanwhile being perfectly quiescent, and often totally oblivious of what is being written. The messages are the outflowings of the subconscious mind, and there is nothing supernatural whatever in them.

The medium, when awakened, does not usually remember the communication which has been spoken, or written, until he or she returns again to the state of trance. This also is exactly as in hypnotism.

Now, with reference to verbal communications supposed to emanate from disembodied spirits, a medium may be able, by profound abstraction, or self-hypnosis, to get his own brain impressed by the subliminal mental activity of those who watch his performance. He may not be able to read all that is going on in the subconsciousness of those who wish to communicate with their departed friends; he may become impressed by isolated fragments only. But, since these correspond with the actual memories, the result seems, to the persons present, so marvellous as to increase their belief in spirit communications; and, as pointed out already, many of them were probably at the outset favourable to the spiritistic

hypothesis—subconsciously, if not consciously. This is the most likely explanation; and so long as we can find a "natural" explanation it would be folly to seek a supernatural one.

That spirit messages emanate from the medium's brain is also evident from the fact that anyone can as readily obtain a communication from an imaginary person as from a real one, from a living person as from the dead, provided the medium does not happen to know the facts.

No doubt the medium, being in a state of self-hypnosis, and being controlled by subconscious suggestion, believes himself to be moved by the spirit of any deceased person whose name has been mentioned. It is also evident that the value of such messages will depend on the quality of the brain and the type of mentality of the medium employed for that purpose. And that will account for the triviality of the communications received, why so little new knowledge has come to light with regard to the conditions of the discarnate life, and why the communications, as a rule, are quite in harmony with the idea prevailing in the circles to which they come. Spirits rarely give us any information of practical use, and nearly always confine themselves to giving proofs of their presence and identity, usually by trivial means.

To show how false can be the evidence of our senses, it is interesting to recall that when Copernicus and Galileo claimed that the earth revolved round the sun their generation denied the fact, and pointed to the evidence perceptible to all who had eyes that the sun and moon went round the horizon every day, to disappear, and appear again. And it was one of their beliefs that, since the sun could disappear and rise again, so could the soul of man. Here we have a proof that is almost self-evident, and yet it was false. In this example the whole of humanity bore witness; whereas spiritualism rests on purely personal belief and individual experience. It must also never be forgotten that witchcraft, in its day, was supported by evidence just as strong as any brought forward to-day in favour of apparitions.

If spirits there are, if they love those whom they left behind, if there is any love for humanity in the other world, then their manifestations should not require the intervention of uneducated professional mediums and their commonplace interpretations.

It is a curious fact that spiritists are always ready to give us a list of distinguished men—some of them eminent scientists—who can vouch for the genuineness of the spirit phenomena

by their individual experience. Let us examine these experiences more closely.

The late Sir William Crookes, the great chemist, who had photographed a spirit guide (by the name of Katie King), admitted : " She often consulted me about persons present at the séances, and where they should be placed ; for of late she had become very nervous, in consequence of certain ill-advised suggestions that force should be employed as an adjunct to more scientific modes of research. She said she always wanted me to keep close to her, and near the cabinet, and I *found that after this confidence was established, and she was satisfied that I would not break any promise I might make her, the phenomena increased greatly in power.* On applying my ear to Katie's (the guide's) chest, I could hear a heart beating rhythmically inside, and pulsating even more steadily than did Miss Cook's (the medium's) heart, when she allowed me to try a similar experiment after the séance."

If the spirit guide can enforce conditions, the experiment can no longer be called " scientific," and I should have thought that the beating of the heart was a proof of Katie King being a human being and not a spirit. On bidding farewell, Katie, the guide, gave Sir William Crookes general directions for the future guidance and protection of Miss Cook, the medium, and said : " Mr. Crookes has done very well throughout, and I leave Florrie with the greatest confidence in his hands, feeling perfectly sure he will not abuse the trust I place in him." If this means anything at all, it would seem to be an instruction not to do anything which might possibly expose the tricks of the medium. This record shows that even a highly-trained scientific mind can be very credulous.

It is not surprising, therefore, that this and another medium, in whom Sir William Crookes had implicit trust, were detected in deliberate fraud by other people ; so that evidently his critical powers had failed him. And, surely, being so keen to convince others of the existence of spirits, he might himself have appeared, before now, and furnished hitherto unknown proofs.

Here is a description of spirits, by the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, as given in his little book entitled " What does Spiritualism Actually Teach and Stand For ? " He said :

" We claim that we can break through the barrier of death, that those who have lived in this world have not changed either their forms or their characters, but only their vibrations ; so that, instead of manifesting through the flesh body, which

is a low and slow vibration, they live now in an etheric body, which is on a high and fast vibration, and, therefore, invisible to our ordinary mortal eyes, exactly as many things in our daily life fail to impress our senses, because they are on too fast a vibration. . . . When the freed spirit goes forth into his new life, his home has been prepared for him by the loving hands of those who preceded him. It is just as he would like it to be. His own tastes have, in all matters, been consulted. He finds flowers and gardens, woods and streams; all illuminated by a golden radiance. Soon he is offered a choice of duties, so that he may use his natural powers in the best way. Where he has several powers, his vocation may be as hard to find as it often is here. Thus, Lester Coltman, in his posthumous description of the life beyond, had to choose between music and science; eventually choosing science as his study, and music as his recreation. There, as here, facilities are provided for the work in hand—libraries for the scholar; laboratories for the man of science; temples, lecture rooms, centres for dramatic, artistic, and musical education. All these matters are pushed, they declare, far further than with us; indeed, our own developments are merely reflections from above."

Now let me quote *The Times* report of an address, delivered at the Queen's Hall, on "Death and the Hereafter." In this address Sir Arthur Conan Doyle said: "There was the strongest presumption that messages come from those who had passed, and it was natural that we should ask those who had passed to tell us something about their present condition. They said the world was very like the world we were now in. It was so like that many people could not be persuaded they were dead. They said it was a very beautiful habitation, and their present life was exalted, beautified, and extraordinarily happy. They had a busy life. They talked about artistic, literary, dramatic, musical faculties. About God they knew no more than we did. When they talked about Christ they talked with great reverence, and with some knowledge. They looked upon Christ as the highest spirit with which they were brought in contact."

Sir Conan Doyle evidently had a complete picture of "the other world" in his mind, and he was such a convinced spiritist because his mediums described the life hereafter exactly as he had imagined it. Assuming that spiritual bodies are of a higher rate of vibration than our own bodies here, we surely cannot grant the same cause for the existence of houses, gardens, books, and laboratories, which means, also, instru-

ments, chemicals, and so forth. Some of us have had enough work during our life-time, and, if there is a survival, would like, if not rest, at least something different in the next world.

Let us now turn for a further example to the book "Raymond," by Sir Oliver Lodge. On being asked by Sir Oliver whether he had ears and eyes, Raymond, his departed son, replied (talking through Feda, the medium on the other side) : "Yes, yes, and eyelashes and eyebrows, and a tongue and teeth; he has got a new tooth in the place of another one he had. He knew a man who had lost his arm, but got another one." Sir Oliver asked about a limb lost in battle, and was told that if it was only just lost it made no difference. Raymond added that he had been told, though he does not know this himself, that "when anybody is blown to pieces it takes some time for the spirit body to complete itself." He was then asked what happened when bodies had been burned. "If bodies are burnt by accident," he replied, "if they know it on this side, they detach the spirit first; what we call a spirit doctor comes round and helps. But bodies should not be burnt on purpose. We have terrible trouble sometimes over people who are cremated too soon; they should not be cremated for seven days." Sir Oliver then asked whether, on the other side, they could tell any difference between men and women. Raymond answered (again talking through Feda) : "There are men here and there are women here. I don't think that they stand to each other quite the same as they did on the earth plane. There don't seem to be any children born here, but there is a feeling of love between men and women here which is of a different quality from that between two men or two women." He went on : "Some want to eat and drink; if they do, the food given to them is, to all appearances, like an earth food. People here try to provide everything that is wanted. Some want meat, and some strong drink; they call for whisky sodas. Don't think I am stretching it when I tell you that they can manufacture even that. A chap came over the other day who would have a cigar. He did not try one himself, but the other chap jumped at it; but when he began to smoke he did not think so much of it; he had four altogether, but now does not look at one."

Again I must contend that it is only an uneducated medium's brain that could manufacture such an account of life hereafter. It is certainly instructive to know that whisky and cigars are manufactured on the other plane; though, apparently, not of

very good quality. But what do our theologians say to the distilleries and tobacco plantations?

It may be argued that the observations by spiritists are not ready for, and in their nature may not be readily subject to, the concrete and exact application of the scientific method. But this contention offers no excuse for removing such classes of beliefs from the scope of rational reflection and the scientific habits of mind that have created such a beneficent and stimulating atmosphere in more exact realms of thought.

One of the difficulties of the problem seldom mentioned is that the spirit appears at a séance as he was known in life to the sitter; though he may have lived a score of years longer, and have changed his appearance entirely. Similarly, the spirit of a baby never grows old, though the mother, by the time she departs from this world, may be an old woman. Is the old man, changed by age, to meet in the next world his wife who died young? She might not like the old man, preferring her youthful, loving husband. To the credulous, of course, such difficulties are non-existent.

The phenomena may be true, but the intelligence and messages recorded need not be ascribed to the disembodied spirits of humanity. Psychical research, when pursued on scientific lines, may possibly bring some gain by its work; but we shall misjudge its possibilities if we expect that it will do anything to minimize or increase the profound significance of this present life, weighted with all its amazing powers and responsibilities.

The only survival that science takes cognisance of, and of which any demonstrable knowledge exists, is that of the continuity of the germ plasm. It proves humanity to be immortal, but not the individual man; just as the river may be regarded as immortal, but not the drops of water composing it at any particular time. The continuance of the germ plasm reduces the soul to an heirloom, modified by each successive inheritor, for better or worse, thus rendering immortality a kind of Buddhistic metempsychosis; finally to end—when heredity ends with the race—in Buddhistic annihilation.

All that science can say, for the present, is that we live in our offspring—in the life we transmit to our children—and, further, in the influence and example that we have exercised on our surroundings. Every life, more or less, forms another life; lives in another life. There is none so humble that he does not exercise some influence which keeps his spirit alive—at least for a time—after the dissolution of the body. Activity

on earth in the real and known work of life, in the welfare of those whom we have loved, and in the happiness of those who come after us—therein lies the only immortality that science can answer for. As we live for others in life, so we live in others after death.

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